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 U.S. Department of Agriculture

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

MAKE GOOD USE OF CANTALOUPE IN SEASON

School is out, the Fourth of July is just around the corner, and sultry summer days are here at last. With hot weather comes a need to revise the menu to include cool and refreshing foods, such as the cantaloupe now appearing in market displays. This melon, because of its widespread popularity, is almost always a good item to start or end any meal.

WATCH FOR PEAK SUPPLY PERIODS

Because of a smaller acreage planted this year, cantaloupe supplies for the current season are indicated to be lighter than either last year or the average year, according to the Agricultural Marketing Administration.

However, although supplies are not likely to be heavy in general, they will be larger at certain times as the cantaloupe season advances. One such increase or "peak period" is practically here as peak harvests in California, Arizona, Georgia, and South Carolina reach the market. They will be followed by other like periods as later producing areas send their melons to market. Consumers can watch for these times and take advantage of them.

SELECT CANTALOUPE CAREFULLY

An important thing the homemaker must know about cantaloupe is how to pick

out a good one at market. For the flavor to be just right, the melon must have been picked full ripe, not too green nor too ripe. There are ways to tell by looking at a cantaloup whether it is in top condition for the table.

Look at the stem end of the melon. If picked just ripe enough, the melon will have a clean scar where the stem used to be. If picked too green, it will have part of the stem still attached or a rough, deep scar where it was pulled out.

Hold the melon in your hands and look it over. If good for serving, it will be firm and well netted. The blossom end, opposite the stem end, will be firm and show no paleness and a slight golden color will be seen through the netting which covers the melon. Sometimes you find little globules of red-brown sugar about the stem scar. When you do, you can be fairly sure the melon is sweet.

Immature cantaloups are usually poorly netted and the surface color under the netting is green. The flesh, or meat, is usually hard, tough, and flavorless. In comparison, overmature cantaloups are generally soft, watery, and do not have a pleasing flavor. You can spot overmature melons by very definite yellowing of the rind seen through the netting.

When buying cantaloups be sure not to buy bruised ones, or those which are flabby, shriveled, or have decayed spots. Decay is revealed by soft sunken places on the melon and by mold or moisture on the stem end.

The past few years have seen considerable advancement in producing and handling cantaloups as well as introduction of better quality melons. Today cantaloups can be picked full ripe, shipped, and placed on near or distant markets in top condition for table use. Those from the west usually have salmon colored flesh, while those from the south include white as well as salmon and pink meat types.

Sugar rationing tends to make cantaloups and other sweet melons even more desirable than in times when sweets are plentiful. And besides having a pleasing

taste and appearance, the cantaloup contains vitamin C and iron, and smaller amounts of some other vitamins and minerals.

SERVE WITH A DASH

The cantaloup is a handsome melon, attractive in color and shape. It really needs no decoration to look well. However, if you like to dress up your dishes, you will find the cantaloup an easy subject.

When melons are served in halves, the center hole is just right for berries, diced fruit, or ice cream. If you serve larger ones by the quarter or slice, you can make a colorful picture of the dish by laying some fruit in the center or at one side of the melon. Grapes, cherries, red or black berries, and pears offer good colors to blend with the pink of cantaloup meat.

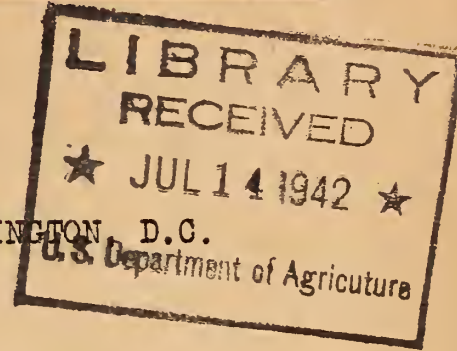
It is best to chill cantaloup before serving. Place it uncut in your refrigerator or other cold storage place until time to serve. Then cut it as you want it. Serve small half cantaloups on "beds" of ice, if you like, but do not place ice in the melon center -- melting ice dilutes the flavor.

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THE MARKET BASKET
by
Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

FIGHT FOOD WASTE

When you throw away a bad egg...or spoiled meat...or more good milk goes sour than you can use --- STOP! LOOK! FIGHT FOOD WASTE!

Multiply that egg and meat and milk by the Nation's 34 million homes. You have a staggering total of wasted food and wasted energy producing it.

There is plenty of food in this country --- but none to waste. And summer is the season when food wastes invariably increase. Therefore home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture offer the following timely suggestions for taking care of the most perishable foods.

FOODS TO WATCH

Put on your list of foods to watch most closely meat --- eggs --- milk. Not only are these the foods that spoil most quickly but they are all on the list of "more" foods in the Food-for-Freedom campaign. Farmers are making an all-out effort this year to produce more of all of them.

So don't take any chances on wasting them. To keep them over a day, you need a refrigerator or another very cold storage space. If you haven't such storage space, don't keep any more on hand than you can use immediately.

In addition to being foods that spoil quickly --- meat and milk-and-egg mixtures can become sources of dangerous food poisoning.

MEAT

Keep raw meat, poultry, and fish in the coldest part of your refrigerator or your coldest storage place. A temperature of 45 degrees Fahrenheit or lower is needed. If your coldest storage space isn't this cold, buy meat the same day you use it, and keep it as cool as possible up to the time you cook it. Be doubly careful of ground raw meat. It spoils more quickly than meat in one piece. Keep it extra cold, and use it extra quickly.

When you bring meat home from the store, take off the wrapping paper. Store it loosely covered with wax paper.

Wash poultry thoroughly -- inside and out. Pat it dry. Store it wrapped or covered loosely until time to cook it. Then, if you don't plan to eat it right away, chill it quickly and keep it chilled until serving time.

As for fish, that spoils at only a few hours of room temperature. Cook it at once or wrap it in wax paper to keep the fish odor out of other food, and store it in a very cold place.

Cover cooked meats before you put them away. Cut or chop meat just before you plan to serve it. Meat that has been cut or chopped spoils more quickly than cooked meat in one piece.

Make up meat sandwiches and meat salads only shortly before you intend to serve them. Keep them cold until serving time.

MILK

In many parts of the country, every-other-day milk deliveries are accentuating the usual problem of keeping milk sweet in the summer. If you haven't ample refrigerator room, it may be better to buy every other day's supply at the store.

Milk, like meat, belongs in the colder part of the refrigerator. Never let it stand out at room temperature. When you get milk out for cooking, take

only as much of the bottle as you need -- pop the bottle back into the cold quickly. Put away milk or cream you've used at the table the first thing after the meal -- but don't pour it back into the main supply. Keep milk away from odorous foods, such as fish, onions, cabbage, or melons. Milk is kept covered, of course. Use suds and sun on all milk containers.

Opened condensed milk and dried milk keep better well-covered in the refrigerator.

EGGS

Eggs can lose a lot of their freshness after a few hours in a warm room. Keep them in your coldest storage space. Take out as many as you want at one time -- but keep the main supply in the icebox, refrigerator, or other cold place. Best storage containers for them are open bowls or wire baskets. Never wash eggs before you store them, or you wash off the protective "bloom" or film that keeps out air and odors. If eggs are soiled, wipe them with a dry, rough cloth.

MILK-AND-EGG DISHES

The combination of milk and eggs is a summertime favorite -- and one of the quickest to spoil. It is best to make up custards, cream pies, puddings, cream puffs not long ahead of time. Put them in the refrigerator immediately after they are prepared, and keep them there until serving time.

In the same class of easy-to-spoil foods are homemade salad dressings made with egg, egg sandwiches, devilled eggs.

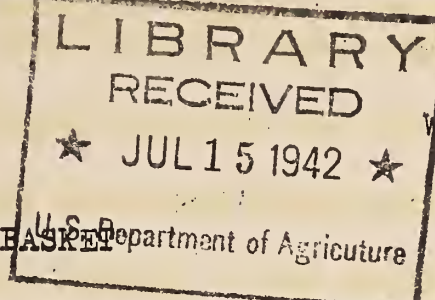
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THE MARKET BASKET
by U.S. Department of Agriculture

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

BROILERS AND FRYERS -- A VICTORY FOOD SPECIAL



NOTE TO EDITORS: From time to time, the Agricultural Marketing Administrator of the U. S. Department of Agriculture designates certain foods as VICTORY FOOD SPECIALS. These "specials" are foods that, for one reason or another, are super-abundant on the market. They must be moved promptly in order to make full use of this country's wartime food supply. Consumers can keep good food from wasting -- save grocery dollars by taking advantage of these food specials. In the following paragraphs are suggestions for using the current VICTORY FOOD SPECIAL being featured by food merchants the Nation over.

Broilers and fryers...supplying ideal poultry dishes for summertime meals...will be featured throughout the Nation from July 16 through 25 as a "Victory Food Special."

They have been designated as such because young chickens are abundant now, due to expanded poultry production to fill wartime egg needs. The surplus cockerels created by this increase in poultry population are excellent for broiling or frying.

If you plan to take advantage of this "Victory Food Special," here are some tips from home economists, U. S. Department of Agriculture, to help you prepare that broiler or fryer for a good chicken dinner.

TEN STEPS TO GOOD BROILED CHICKEN

- Buy plump, young chickens weighing about $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, dressed weight — that is, plucked but not drawn and with head and feet still attached.
- Split down both the back and breastbone, and use each half for a serving.
- Wash the chicken with water and wipe as dry as you can. Never soak it.
- Coat with melted fat — sprinkle with salt and pepper. If you like, sprinkle flour over the fat.
- Put the chicken in the broiler — skin side away from the heat at first.
- Keep the heat moderate.
- Turn the chicken several times as it browns, and baste often.
- Cook evenly, clear to the bone.
- If you prefer, cook it partly ~~done~~ in a broiler and finish slowly in the oven.
- Serve hot, with pan drippings or melted fat poured over the broiled chicken.

TWELVE STEPS TO GOOD FRIED CHICKEN

- Allow for each person at least $3/4$ pound chicken, dressed weight.
- Disjoint the chicken and cut into pieces for serving.
- Wash them with water and pat as dry as possible. Never soak.
- Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and roll in flour. Or dip in slightly beaten egg, diluted with a tablespoon of water or milk, and roll in fine, dry bread crumbs, corn meal, or flour.
- Use a thick frying pan to spread the heat evenly.
- Put in enough fat so when melted it is about a half inch or more deep. Fat should be hot but not smoking when you put in the chicken.
- Fry thickest pieces of chicken first. They take longer to cook.
- Do not crowd chicken in the pan. Leave enough room so the fat can come up around each piece.
- Cook at moderate heat — turn each piece when it is brown. Moderate heat helps hold in the juice and keeps the protein tender.
- When done, take pieces from the pan and drain them on absorbent paper.
- To keep chicken hot until time to serve, put in a heated pan or crock.

-----If you have a lot of chicken to fry at one time, you may want to cook it partly done in a frying pan, then finish in a moderate oven.

TO MAKE CREAM GRAVY

-----Mix 2 tablespoons flour with 2 tablespoons drippings and the brown pieces in the frying pan.

-----Add gradually $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold milk. Stir constantly.

-----Cook slowly until gravy is smooth and thickened.

-----Season as you like it.

-----And don't throw away any chicken fat. If there's more than you want for gravy, strain out the brown particles and store in a dark cold place to help season other food. Don't let a drop of fat go to waste. Salvage it for your country's war needs if you can't use it yourself in food.

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THE MARKET BASKET

by

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A GOOD SEASON FOR CANNING PEACHES



NOTE TO EDITORS: From time to time, the Agricultural Marketing Administrator of the U. S. Department of Agriculture designates certain foods as VICTORY FOOD SPECIALS. These "specials" are foods that, for one reason or another, are super-abundant on the market. They must be moved promptly in order to make full use of this country's wartime food supply. Consumers can keep good food from wasting--save grocery dollars by taking advantage of these food specials. In the following paragraphs are suggestions for using the current VICTORY FOOD SPECIAL being featured by food merchants the Nation over.

Attention, homemakers - and anyone else who is planning to can fruit while the summer harvests are ripe! This is the season for peaches and the crop is a good one. In fact, peaches are the "Victory Food Special" from July 16 to August 5.

For those of you who plan to "put up" some of this fruit for future meals, here are tips from home economists, U. S. Department of Agriculture, on how to do it through the hot-pack method, a good and safe way to can peaches.

GETTING THEM READY

.....Wash peaches in cold water, but do not soak them.

.....Remove the skins. Pare thin to save all the fruit you can.

.....If the skins are hard to take off, put the peaches in hot water for about a half-minute or until the skins will slip easily. Then duck the fruit in cold water for a few seconds before removing the skins.

.....Peaches may turn brown, as a result of their hot water plunge. To help prevent this, you can dip them in a solution of salt, vinegar, and water for about two minutes after removing the skins. Use two tablespoons each of salt and vinegar to a gallon of cold water.

CAN FRUIT IN ITS OWN JUICE

.....Canning fruit in its own juice is a good way to hold in its flavor and food value.

.....First, cut the peaches in slices. You can get more fruit in the jar when peaches are sliced -- an important point in view of the shortage of containers and rubber for canning purposes.

.....Put the sliced fruit in a kettle and add sugar. This is the most economical way to use your canning allotment of sugar. By putting sugar directly on the peaches, you help draw out the juice, waste no sweetening.

.....Let the sugar stand on the sliced fruit a few moments before heating it, to start the juice flowing.

.....Then put the kettle on the stove and heat the peaches slowly until the sugar has dissolved and the fruit is hot throughout. But be sure not to cook the peaches until they are soft.

PACK AND PROCESS

.....Pack the hot fruit with its juice in clean, hot, sterilized jars. Fill each jar to within an inch of the top and pack the fruit firmly but not too tight.

.....Process the jars of peaches in a boiling water bath. You can rig up such a water-bath canner from a large kettle or a wash boiler...any vessel with a tight cover, and big enough to hold several jars and allow for covering them with 1 to 2 inches of water. Fit the canner with a rack to hold the jars off the bottom.

.....Have water in the canner boiling before you put in the jars of fruit.

.....Place the jars on the rack, leaving enough room for water to circulate freely around and under each one.

.....Make sure the water comes over the jar tops at least 1 or 2 inches, and keep it that way throughout processing.

.....Put the top on the canner and start counting processing time as soon as the water begins to boil hard.

.....Process peaches, whether in quart or pint jars, for 15 minutes if you live in altitudes of 1,000 feet or less. If you live in higher altitudes, increase the time 20 percent for each additional 1,000 feet. For instance, you would process 18 minutes at 2,000 feet elevation, and so on.

.....When the fruit is processed, remove the jars from the canner and set them right-side-up to cool.

.....After the fruit has cooled, test each jar by turning it upside-down for a few minutes to be sure it is airtight and doesn't leak.

CANNING PEACHES BY HALVES

.....To can peaches in halves, make a light sirup using the proportion of 5 cups of sugar to a gallon of water.

.....Bring the sirup to a boil, and then drop in the peaches, peeled, pitted, and halved.

.....When the peaches are thoroughly heated, pack them into jars with the sirup.

.....Process in the boiling water bath as described for sliced peaches.

.....If you like, in making the sirup, use honey or corn sirup in place of part of the sugar. Use equal parts of honey and sugar. With corn sirup, use two-thirds sugar and one-third corn sirup.

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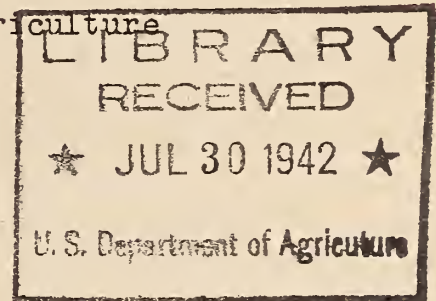
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

REMOVING FRUIT STAINS FROM COTTONS AND LINENS



Fresh fruits to eat....vitamin rich and full of refreshing juice....are one of the pleasures of summertime. But these fruits often leave a tell-tale mark on table linen and clothes that becomes an ugly stain unless you act promptly.

As part of our wartime campaign to conserve cloth, here are some tips from home economists, U. S. Department of Agriculture, on how to remove fruit stains from cottons and linens.

TREAT THEM QUICKLY - TREAT THEM RIGHT

Start working on stains while they are still fresh and damp, if possible. They are harder to get out once they have dried. In any case, remove stains before you launder the fabric. Alkalies, such as in soap, and the heat from the flatiron "set" some fruit and berry stains, making them difficult and sometimes even impossible to get out.

Simple remedies will take out some stains. Unless you are sure of the stain's origin and the right "cure," however, work cautiously until you hit upon the best method of removing it.

Boiling water will remove most fruit stains from white or colorfast cotton or linen, except those from peaches, pears, and plums. First, stretch the stained fabric over a bowl, and fasten with a string so it cannot slip off. Then pour on the water from a height of 3 or 4 feet, so it strikes the stain with force. If

necessary, rub the fabric between applications of boiling water, to help loosen the stain. Sometimes even warm water will work successfully in removing a stain.

If the stain is not completely gone when you have finished the water treatment, put a little lemon juice on the spot and put it in the sun to bleach. Or you can use one of the chemical bleaches, such as hydrogen peroxide and sodium perborate....hydrosulphite....or javelle water.

To use hydrogen peroxide and sodium perborate, mix 1 teaspoon of sodium perborate to 1 pint of peroxide. Then, before you start working on the stain, test the effect of this solution on the color of the fabric - test on the inside hem, a seam allowance, or any place that will not show. If the color is fast and does not fade, try the solution on the stain.

First, sponge the stain with the solution and then rinse thoroughly with water. If the stain is very stubborn, sprinkle powdered sodium perborate on the dampened fabric and let it stand for a half hour. Then rinse well again.

Hydrosulphites are good bleaches to use for removing fruit stains from any white material. You can buy them at drug stores, and follow the directions on the package.

Javelle water, another bleach, is good for stains on white cotton or linen materials. To make Javelle water, mix 1/2 pound of washing soda in 1 quart of cold water, and then add 1/4 pound of chloride of lime. Strain the solution through a piece of muslin. To keep on hand, store in a bottle with a tight cork or stopper.

To use Javelle water, first stretch the stained cloth over a bowl filled with cold water and drop the solution on it with a medicine dropper. Or, if the stain is a large one, you can dip the entire garment in Javelle water. However, never let this bleach stay on a stain more than 1 minute - it rots the material if it stays on longer. After using Javelle water, rinse the fabric in

luke-warm or cool water right away.

Then apply a few drops of another solution - to stop the rotting action of chlorine remaining in the cloth as the result of using Javelle water. Make this solution of 1/2 teaspoon of sodium thiosulphate and 1 to 2 teaspoons of vinegar in 1 pint of water. After using, rinse the fabric well in clear water. You may have to repeat the Javelle water - thiosulphate treatment several times before the stain is completely gone.

FOR PEACH, PEAR, AND PLUM STAINS

Use a cold water and glycerine treatment for fresh peach, pear, and plum stains on cotton and linen. First, sponge the stain well with cool water. Then put several drops of glycerine or a soapless shampoo on the stain - enough to cover the stain. Work in by rubbing the fabric between your hands. Let it stand for several hours, then put on a few drops of vinegar or oxalic acid. Allow it to remain for a minute or two, and then rinse well in water.

FOR STAINS FROM CITRUS FRUITS

In case you have some stains from citrus fruits, such as grapefruit and lemon, try washing the fabric in warm, soapy water. But if the stain is an old one or the fabric has been pressed since it was stained, use one of the bleaches mentioned above. If the acid in the citrus fruit changes the color of the fabric, you can restore it by using ammonia or baking soda - after washing and rinsing the stain in cold water.

To use ammonia, hold the dampened stain over an open bottle of strong ammonia water. Or, if the material doesn't water spot, put on a few drops of the ammonia water diluted to half-strength. Have white vinegar ready to use in case the ammonia affects the dye, and sponge the stain quickly with a cloth wet with the vinegar. To use baking soda, sprinkle it on both sides of the stain, dampen with water, and let it stand until the bubbling stops. Then rinse in water.

